

**Memorandum of the Meeting
Regular Study Session/Meeting
Twenty-Eighth Town Council of Highland
Monday, July 21, 2014**

The regular study session of the Twenty-Eighth Town Council of the Town of Highland was convened at the regular place, the Highland Municipal, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana, in the plenary meeting chambers on **Monday, July 07, 2014** at the time of 7:05 o'clock p.m.

Silent Roll Call: Councilors Bernie Zemen, Mark Herak, Dan Vassar, Dennis Adams and Konnie Kuiper were present. A quorum was attained. The Clerk-Treasurer Michael W. Griffin was present to memorialize the proceedings.

Also present: Cecile Petro, Redevelopment Director; Greg Kuzmar, Heather Peterson, Dominic Noce, Jim Kessler, and Bridget DeYoung of the Redevelopment Commission; Steve Mileusnich of the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals; Kelly Bridges of the Community Events Commission; Randy Bowman, Electrical Inspector and Ed Dabrowski of CBL Consulting - the IT Consultant; were present.

General Substance of Matters Discussed

1. *Presentation regarding the Proposed Rehabilitation of the Town Theater at 8616 Kennedy Avenue, Highland.* Commissioner Bridget DeYoung of the Redevelopment Commission acted as moderator and guided a presentation by several consultants regarding the developed proposal for retrofit and refurbishment of the Town Theater.

The presentation included a cursory survey of the history of the building, noting its opening July 20, 1946. The historical overview included a survey of the ownership and the recent acquisition of the building by the Redevelopment Department in a tax sale.

A number of grants to support the process of planning or the retrofit of the Town Theater marquee were acknowledged.

Main Street Bureau Board of Directors Member Dr. Daniel Dunn presented an overview of elements that informed the "business philosophy" and the vision that informed the initiation of the acquisition of the Town Theater. It was noted that a restored and operating Town Theater is conceived as an anchor to the Kennedy Avenue segment of the Downtown Redevelopment District. The presentation included a catalogue of possible activities that could be conducted in the Town Theater as well as the synergies that could be realized among the existing businesses as well as the prospect for new businesses to locate in the district in consequence of the retrofit and reconstruction of the Theater.

Ken Gurtowski, AIA, NCARB, Senior Vice President and Managing Director of VOA Architects, 8145 Kennedy Avenue, Highland, presented a conceptual, artistic rendering of a possible rehabilitated Town Theater. *Mr. Manny Diamantopoulos*, also of VOA Architects, joined him assisting with presenting further graphic depictions to assist in realizing the proposed rehabilitation project.

The presentation acknowledged the state of disrepair of the property, the new legal design requirements, building code and ADA strictures and the inadequacy of the existing building to be likely to be brought into compliance without additional space.

It was further noted that after exploring the interest of owners to sell the adjoining building to the south, it was noted that the owners of the two buildings to the north were interested in selling. The redesign and rehabilitation was conceived on the assumption that the two buildings to the North would be acquired.

Excluding the acquisition costs associated with the properties to the North, Mr. Gurtowski estimated the cost of the rehabilitation to be between \$1.5 to \$2 million dollars.

With leave from the Town Council, noting the significant number of persons present to also receive the presentation, questions from visitors present were permitted.

Questions included whether there would be added parking, whether the financing of this project would affect an undue financial burden, and whether the existing ticket booth could be reinvigorated and made operational. (It was noted that no additional parking apart from some spots in the back of the building would be developed. It was further noted that the financing was dependent upon a number of sources. It still further noted that the ticket booth was designed in a different age and could not be retrofitted to comply with the current building and ADA requirements and be usable.

Steven B. Libman of the Libman Group, an Arts Management Consultant and Executive, presented his assessment of the feasibility of the rehabilitated Town Theater, as a smaller niche venue for older motion pictures, as well as small event location.

Mr. Libman offered insight into how the Arts can drive economic development. Mr. Libman offered a projected three-year plan for operations summarized below:

	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Income:	\$376,295	\$354,345	\$444,400
Expenses:	\$337,089	\$344,977	\$386,815

Mr. Libman noted that the income would include some standing governmental support and the operational plan envisioned a full-time manager working with volunteers to execute the plans as conceived.

Tom Bylek from the Tom Foolery Fan Club, a special comedy group, spoke to how such smaller venues were highly sought by their group to perform. During its recent launch, two recent shows for another purpose were sold out. Mr. Bylek suggested that his group could be employed to perform at the site or in advance to raise money to advance the project.

With leave from the Town Council, further questions or comments from visitors present were permitted.

- A resident suggested an idea for a T-Shirt Design that could be sold to promote the rehabilitation and to raise money to support it.
- A resident inquired about the likelihood of acquiring the buildings to the north to support the project.
- A resident or visitor noted the acoustics associated with the Theater when it was operating and expressed the hope that the acoustics would be improved.
- Another visitor revealed that she grew up in Highland, left to participate in the arts district in Las Vegas and suggested her support for the proposed renovation.
- A visitor suggested the use of "Crowd-Funding" techniques, gaining popularity in Social Networks, to advance the renovation of the Town Theater.
- Another resident asked about the formation of a community advisory board to be a part of the project and its operation.

- There were several inquiries regarding what was needed to move the project forward.
- Mr. Richard Volbrecht inquired about the cost-benefits of the project.
- It was noted by the Clerk-Treasurer that if the construction cost was \$2 million, and was to be financed by a special taxing district bond, further assuming the house had a gross assessed value of \$150,000, a twenty year financing would add possibly \$6.69 per year to a tax bill. This further assumed the assessed value of the tax base remained stable. Further, the Clerk-Treasurer noted that the circuit breaker credits would protect the house used in the illustration to not exceed \$1,500. Depending on the total taxes, if the taxpayer were already paying at the cap, the bond issue would not add to the tax bill of the homeowner.

There being no further business necessary or desired to be discussed by the Town Council, the regular study session of the Town Council of **Monday, July 21, 2014**, was adjourned at 9:04 o'clock p.m.

Michael W. Griffin, IAMC/MMC/CPFA/CPFIM/CMO
Clerk-Treasurer